

# Landscapes: the Journal of the International Centre for Landscape and Language

---

Volume 8

Issue 1 *Landscape: Heritage*

Article 3

---

2018

## Becoming Human in the Land: An Introduction to the Special Issue of Heritage: Landscapes

Drew Hubbell

[4dhubbs@gmail.com](mailto:4dhubbs@gmail.com)

---

### Recommended Citation

Hubbell, D. (2018). Becoming Human in the Land: An Introduction to the Special Issue of Heritage: Landscapes. *Landscapes: the Journal of the International Centre for Landscape and Language*, 8(1).

Retrieved from <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/landscapes/vol8/iss1/3>

This Article (refereed) is posted at Research Online.

<http://ro.ecu.edu.au/landscapes/vol8/iss1/3>

## **Becoming Human in the Land: An Introduction to the Special Issue of *Landscapes*, “Heritage-Landscape”**

*J. Andrew “Drew” Hubbell (Edith Cowan University, Susquehanna University, University of  
Western Australia)*

“Architecture is what you finally console yourself with once you’ve brought the landscape to its knees.” Tim Winton, “Strange Passion: A Landscape Memoir.”<sup>1</sup>

“In Wildness is the preservation of the world.” Henry David Thoreau, “Walking.”

“A natural beauty should be preserved like a monument.” Neil Young, “Harvest Moon”

“The past is never over.” Richard Flanagan, *Death of a River Guide*”

In August, 2017, as we developed the theme for this issue of *Landscapes*, coincidental events focused our attention on the way competing human interest groups use landscapes to reflect competing ideas of “The Human.” At the same time Confederate monuments across southern states in the US are the backdrop to violent debates over the legacies of African enslavement, Donald Trump rolled back Obama-era preservation for iconic landscapes from Maine to California. Such rollbacks would change not just how these landscapes are used by humans, but more fundamentally, what these landscapes mean for humans. Will these public lands be frozen in time to memorialize the fantasy of primal American wildness, a testimony to the rugged individualism and indomitable spirit that brought forth American civilization and asserts its manifest destiny? Or will the landscape drama of man v nature give way to human replacement of nature as public lands are turned into industrial parks? Ironically, Trump’s subsequent rejection of the Paris Accord rededicates America to the nostalgic fantasy of man conquering nature. Instead of a Yellowstone or Yosemite, the entire climate will be asked to sustain the fiction that humans are superior to nature—industrial carbon emissions either do not affect climate systems or benefit climate systems. Of course, by continuing to narrate the

---

<sup>1</sup> Richard Woldendorp and Tim Winton, *Down to Earth: Australian Landscape*, Fremantle, WA: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1999, xi.

frontier myth, we will leave our legacy imprinted on all earthen landscapes for geological time: pyramids to denial more permanent than any pyramid on the Nile.

The case of Confederate statues has been particularly contentious and provides a powerful reminder for why the question of Landscape-Heritage is essential for our inquiry. Many argue that the statues in question, generally of Confederate political or military elites erected in central parks or squares in the 1920-30s, elevate slave-holding white warriors to hero status while erasing the actual, multiracial heritage of southern culture. Others argue that the statues remind later generations of one of the conflicts defining US culture “lest we forget,” and our continued ties to that past, which, as Faulkner reminds us, is not even past. Germany engages in a similar debate about whether and how to monumentalize its Nazi heritage. Other countries, like Turkey, China, Indonesia and Myanmar, ban discussion of their genocidal heritage. Australia is riven by debate about whether and how to mark the advent of British colonization in January, 1788.

At this moment, across nations, sensible discussion about how people make landscapes meaningful is shouted down in the contentious, occasionally violent struggle to ensure that the landscape is imprinted with the “right” history. White supremacists marched at the University of Virginia in 2017 to protest local government’s decision to remove Confederate statues from public squares, and one of their members murdered a counter protester in an act that looked identical to terrorist attacks in Nice and elsewhere.

Civil War heritage dominates Eastern US landscapes. Landscapes tell many stories of human and non-human activity—why should this one chapter be preserved as if it were the master theme of the entire national story? White military and political elites are given pride of place in public space, erasing multiple, shared heritage narratives in these important landscapes. This need not be true. As Jade Robison argues in her essay in this issue, a very long history of human-nature relations is inscribed in the Natchitoches Trail, which was used most famously for Cherokee Indian removal in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. “The Trail of Tears” is one of many layered heritages memorialized in that landscape. Clive Barstow’s

image, “War,” in this issue calls attention to the complex dynamics of colonization, appropriation, nostalgia, aggression, and reinscription that play through the American cultural imaginary in historically significant landscapes of the west, generally seen in Arcadian terms. His cross-cultural images excavate these dynamics in Australian and Chinese imaginaries, but “War” speaks strongly to me of the way our knowledge of the past “jigsaws” violently with competing desires to paint genocidal, racist pasts in the golden glow of Technicolor reconstructions, whether those be Disney-fying folklore, rewriting history textbooks to frame the war against slavery as a war of states’ rights against federalism, or erecting monuments of slaveholders in the central squares of towns and cities as a way of turning the civil war into a continuation of the American fight for freedom and independence. The meaning of the American civil war 1861-65 is crucial to the meaning of America, and key landscapes are employed in the task of channeling the polyphony into a single master narrative. The inadequacies of this master narrative and the anxieties caused by the instability of its symbolic markers feed into the demagoguery of Trumpism and the New Right.

Bill Nichols sheds some light on the question of why Civil War heritage dominates Eastern US landscapes. He cites research on rural areas as particularly important “signifiers of national identity, or as the counterpoint to modernity” (“Shifting Rurality”). From this perspective, a rural, bucolic place like Gettysburg, Pennsylvania is vitally important as a signifier of the highwater mark, not just of Confederate power, but of the entire aristocratic, Southern Agrarian, “pre-modern” way of life which rapidly gave way to the industrial, urban, modern way of life. As one of the most important signifiers holding this version of the national story of the US together, Gettysburg’s narratives must be carefully regulated under the master signifier of “The Civil War,” or, as I knew it during my adolescence, “The War Between the States.” The renaming, which started in the 1920s with the re-emergence of white supremacy, was significant because it began the long process of rewriting the war as a contest over states’ rights, rather than a battle over whether the United States would continue the institutions of slavery.

My first awareness of the illogic fracturing the carefully curated meaning of Gettysburg's heritage occurred when I was an undergraduate at Gettysburg College. The town of Gettysburg is surrounded by land on which the great civil war battle was fought on 1-3 July, 1863. More blood was spilled on those landscapes in those three days than any other in the US—between 46,000 and 51,000 people were killed with tens of thousands more wounded. Abraham Lincoln gave one of the greatest speeches ever penned to pay tribute to the sacrifice of these lives and propel this place into human memory. It is hallowed, sacred ground.

However, with more than 1300 markers commemorating the battle, and thousands more references on every street, building, restaurant menu, storefront, hotel brochure, campground, playground and billboard, the place is saturated with this one idea. The small town is hemmed in by the 4998 acre park, forced to curate its region for the ogling eyes of one and a half million tourists a year. Stand anywhere within its boundaries, and you will see and hear the legacy of those three days inscribed across the landscape in every direction. It often felt that nothing else existed.

When I was at Uni, I loved to walk, run, and cycle through the battlefields. They are beautiful, open expanses of field and meadow, rocky outcroppings, wooded hills, pasture, orchard—all of which would have been built up with industry, casinos, resort hotels, golf courses, and tract housing were it not for the Civil War and the hardcore preservationists who have successfully frozen the place in an image of 1863. I remember taking Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" (another symbolic heritage landscape, sacred to the preservation of Englishness) to Little Round Top, climbing down to my favorite stack of boulders, elegantly piled by glaciation tens of thousands of years earlier, and reciting the poem across the rugged slope that Southern troops had charged up in the face of Northern artillery. Narrowing my gaze to screen out the car park at Devil's Den and the statuary that now pays tribute to the dead soldiers, I could see Wordsworth's "little lines of sportive wood run wild," and the "groves and copses clad in one green hue." I could hear the mountain springs rolling with a soft inland murmur and experience how the steep and lofty cliffs in this wild secluded scene

connected the landscape to the quiet of the sky. They impressed on me thoughts of their more deep seclusion. This sublime and blessed mood lasted until the next tour bus roared through the scene.

Returning to my apartment in a huff, I posed the question to my roommates—“Why do we have to have all of these concrete statues cluttering up this beautiful Pennsylvania landscape?” They looked at me in horror: “Dude, people died there! It’s sacred.” “But,” I replied, “why does it have to be sacred to people? Why aren’t trees, rocks, birds, and flowers sacred? The statues destroy the landscape. Besides, it would be a more fitting tribute to the soldiers if it was preserved exactly as it was when they died—just nature and farms, no statues. What could be more profound than the emptiness of landscape?”

My roommates and I saw the landscape too differently to sort through the contradictions that cut through our different positions and achieve a more complex understanding of landscape and heritage. To them, the Gettysburg landscape meant three days of heroic contest between the old order of agrarian aristocracy and a new order of industrial capitalism, a tragic but inevitable story of Progress epitomized in Pickett’s Charge. To me, it meant a lost Wordsworthian-Thoreauvian pastoralism for human contemplation and recreation, another tragic story, this one of civilization’s corruption of idealized primitivism. Neither of us acknowledged the rich, long history of Delaware tribes who had, through fire, hunting, and trade, reshaped the land prior to European colonization and were exterminated shortly thereafter—even though we had seen our landlord’s massive collection of Native American axes and arrowheads, which he had found while walking freshly tilled cornfields. Nor did we think about the centuries of European homesteaders and farmers who sculpted the land into bucolic beauty with axe, plow, sheep, and cow. Nor, truth be told, did we white, middle-class, rural Northern boys really understand this battle as a contest over the institution of slavery, thinking of it instead as a Federalist-States’ Rights “War Between the States,” as we had been taught in our bleached history. All of these other heritages are part of this landscape, along with other records of natural history.

My roommates and I, and the million plus tourists who pass through every year, were unaware that Gettysburg, PA is rich, diverse, complex, traumatic, and beautiful heritage landscape. If some of these invisible heritages could share the spotlight with three days in July, 1863, not only would the meaning of the place expand in people's consciousness, it would enhance the value and hence the way people interact with the place. Polyphony requires greater attentiveness and openness to the immanence of meaning. A landscape that has been reduced to repeat a single melody over and over loses its capacity *to become with* its human itinerants, an idea Verena Hofig's essay, included in this issue, problematizes in relation to Viking sagas of Icelandic settlement.

Civil War monuments crystalize a paradox in modern, Western culture between preservation and progress, land utility and public interest. Do we preserve landscapes that tell stories of the past or use those landscapes for present and future needs? Whose story is preserved? How will development affect the landscape's ability to tell multiple stories and support other uses? Neither position respects nonhuman interests in landscapes, nor the basic need for ecosystem integrity and evolution. Nor do they acknowledge how humans become human in and with landscapes, not apart from them or by replacing them with built environments. Certain landscapes, like Gettysburg, we like to freeze into static symbols of our collectively preferred cultural meanings. Other narratives, other meanings are sacrilegious. We require other landscapes—Yosemite, the Kimberley, the Serengeti—to perform primeval wilderness, a mirror of our own cordoned-off, "Abstract Wild," as Jack Turner once argued. Current inhabitants are forcibly removed. On other landscapes, we build techno-cocoons of concrete regularity that proclaim our superiority to natural cycles.

Tim Winton's blistering critique of the latter approach is specifically related to Perth, Australia, my current home. At 600 square kilometres, it is one of the worst cases of urban sprawl in the world and has a built environment that encourages a lifestyle only slightly less environmentally destructive than Saudi Arabia and Singapore, the most unsustainable countries on earth. The CBD offers the solace of architecture as a distinctively modern, western form of becoming human, finding its apotheosis in the

towering triumphalism that is neoliberalism's iconic hubris: vertical glass-and-steel tributes to mining and fossil fuel wealth rising from paved and poisoned wetlands, concrete uniformity spreading to the horizon, beyond which, endless Deepwater Horizons drill to fuel humanity's final solution to landscape's disobedient nonconformity, geoengineering. This is a landscape that John Gordon describes in biblically-inflected terms: "the human ego-- / That now knows better! / Yet still without fore thought / Let alone second / Inserts electronic towers on top of sand dunes / Ravaging melaleuca & fragile tuart, / And polluting in total / The deeper life of place" (see "Sprung" in this issue). In this situation, Thoreau offers a rallying cry for a revolution in values: to preserve the wildness out there so that human wildness has someplace to call home. An ability to see "the deeper life of place," which his writings teach, is absolutely necessary in the midst of modernity's relentless constriction of places to the absolute surface.

I have become with this Western Australian place by reading its stories and witnessing the landscapes they emerged from. Tim Winton, Robert Drewe, David Whish-Wilson, Glen Philips, Kim Scott, John Ryan, and half a dozen other Western Australian writers have opened my awareness to the deeper life of Western Australian landscapes and its diverse heritages. Without a dialectic of the literary and physical place, I could not have grown with and into this strange, beautiful, uncanny, intimidating, exhilarating place. Now, after two years of hearing the names in books and regular trips to Kings Park Botanical Gardens, I can cycle down Perth's suburban streets and recite the litany of "peppermint, lemon gum, balga, laurel, jarrah, marri, jacaranda, bougainvillea, fig, mango, Norfolk pine, banksia." Inspired by these authors and my own curiosity, I study the map of WA posted above my desk, now criss-crossed with orange highlighter to mark my travels. I've through-hiked the Cape to Cape and done sections of the Bibbleman. I've swum with whale sharks off Ningaloo, climbed down canyons in Karajini, camped on lake Goongarie north of Kalgoorlie, celebrated two birthday dawns at the Pinnacles, and spent 4 days entirely alone in the desert—not bad for a middle-aged whitefella from New Hampshire. When I go back to the states and talk about New York's state capital, people correct my pronunciation. I'm more likely to ask someone "how ya' goin" than "how ya



doin,” or call a fellow “mate” instead of “man.” None of this has made me Western Australian, but it has required an expansion of being, sensibility, and awareness. Because everything was so unfamiliar, from trees and birds, to landscape forms and language, being here required retraining certain pathways in my brain—“AL-bany” not “ALL-bany,” “Gi’day mate! Got your sunnies and thongs?” Painful, awkward, difficult; exciting, euphoric, fun. My experience of seeking belonging in the landscape is different from the one Clive Barstow describes, and different again from many other immigrants to this land, but we all had to find some way to translate landscape into a heritage where we could belong.

The experience of growth has triggered my interest in conducting the same kind of systematic engagement with my home region in Pennsylvania—I’ve realized that I know a lot more about Perth than I do about Selinsgrove, but sadly, that’s because, like many natives, I simply assumed Selinsgrove wasn’t worth knowing. If I learn more of Selinsgrove’s land-marks, I’ll hear it’s polyphonic heritage and be able to become with the place.

Like Western Australia, Central Pennsylvania’s spoken language is a rich vernacular of landscape-origin words, a riot of “green-speak” that Robert MacFarlane celebrates in his recent book, *Land-Marks*, reviewed by Patrick Armstrong in this issue. Greg Garrard and Susanna Lidstrom talk about the ability of “ecophenomenological poetry...to heighten individual readers’ awareness of their natural surroundings” (Lidstrom and Garrard 37). Winton’s ferocious defense of Western Australian landscapes, particularly coastal ones, and Robert Drewe’s lyric evocation of 1895 Perth, Swan River, and the Goldfields in *The Drowner* exemplify the ecophenomenological effect of literature on landscapes. At the same time, it is also true, as Ron Broglio argues, that their inscriptions on the landscape “change the things of nature into objects of culture” (Broglio 15-16). Unless those inscriptions are combined with the reader’s phenomenological, bodily experience of place, they will serve to enclose the natural within what he calls “the stasis of Cartesian picturesque technology” (Broglio 18-20). Only by creating a contact zone between our sensing bodies and perceiving minds, inscribed

landscapes, and material landscapes is it possible to sustain the openness of place to the immanence of polyphonic meanings. But this requires a vulnerability of self and body that few seem willing to entertain. Far easier to rest in the certainty of a single master narrative, inscribing it over and over, ad nauseum.

Such a resistance to the stasis of the Cartesian picturesque in service to the master narrative of a colonizer is Clive Barstow's main work in "Imagined Geographies," the opening work in this issue. In his theoretical essay and artworks, Barstow calls attention to the interactions of space, place, and time as dynamic assemblages, often awkwardly jigsawed together, a visual method he employs in his complex, multi-referential designs. He purposely unsettles the idea that places—landscapes—are static backdrops to the linear drama of historical time. His work shows how landscapes are turned into monuments by ideologically charged heritage industries, but are also agents in curating a much more dense, polyphonic local heritage that disrupts the calm, assured histories overwritten on places like Australia and America by Europeans. His complex and unsettling work provides an important set of lenses for examining "Landscape: Heritage," making an excellent starting point for this issue.

Lest it be misunderstood that I am suggesting that there is a "Real" that we can sense that exists below linguistic inscription, Tom Cohen and Claire Colebrook remind us that we live as much within language as landscape, and that "inscription goes all the way down": "if there is no nature, no climate, no humanity and no truth that would exist outside inscription, then what remains is the *reading* of inscriptions" (Cohen, Colebrook and Miller 12). Hence the importance of an issue on "Landscape-Heritage" in a journal titled *Landscapes* that comes out of an International Centre for Landscape and Language. To experience landscape is also, at a very deep level, to experience language, whether that is because our senses are directed by the stories we've read, or because we orient ourselves to places by naming: "peppermint, lemon gum, balga, laurel, jarrah, marri, jacaranda, bougainvillea, fig, mango, Norfolk pine." We still "sing the land into being," but we do it differently, perhaps with less sensitivity or awareness of what we are doing, or with greater desire for mastery. Singing the land into being is never neutral; it is always

an illumination that at the same time occludes (Cohen, Colebrook and Miller 8). This contact between language and landscape creates heritage, because language is not a transparent “medium through which thought communicates, but a multiplicity of relations and traces that enables what comes to experience itself as thought” (Cohen, Colebrook and Miller 13).

Becoming readers of the language-landscape is a primary act for becoming with the landscape, for in becoming aware of the multiplicity of relations and traces of others, human and nonhuman, an inevitable braiding of self into the polyphonic heritage of place takes place. As Cohen and Colebrook note, this is how Michel Serres conceives of history “as a strata of inscription, where certain lines, marks, events and orders initiate relations among traces that will proceed until one reads and imagines not a time of progress but a sublime becoming” (Cohen, Colebrook and Miller 18). If the beginning of landscape was a random collision of geology and climate, the subsequent history has been a layering of marks by later events and inhabitants, and “the task of reading is one of retracing towards contingency, each step back giving nothing more than marks and reversals” (Cohen, Colebrook and Miller 18). As astute readers trying to figure out the meaning of a place, we go back through all the other inscriptions to their contingency, discovering there our own contingency. That discovery is simultaneously our freedom and responsibility, freedom to inscribe a different future and responsibility to acknowledge the freedom of every other being in that place to manifest its own future. Tracing our inscriptions will lead most of us to confront the legacies of racist, genocidal, colonialist violence that we benefit from. Do we respond with guilt and seek to purify ourselves? Or do we deny our connection to the actions of our ancestors? Barstow suggests a third way, that we work forward to “reinscribe” a new narrative of respectful engagement. The fundamental mistake of Modernity is that, having put an end to History, it thinks it can simply erase what came before to remake the world in its own image. But we exist in unending relationships with countless others who demand reciprocity.

The contributions to this journal issue cohere around this acknowledgement of our relationship with others and the demands of reciprocity. In general terms, they are all

engaged with fundamental questions: What is our heritage in landscapes and where do we find it and practice it? What landscape heritage do we want to entail on future generations? How will that affect their ability to claim belonging in the land? As readers will perceive, the contradictions that we live with at the everyday level relate to the clash instantiated in the material landscape between modernity, with its focus on the instantaneous flash of an absolute present, versus the deep time at which ecosystems operate. Modernity, the ethos which structures our collective lives at the level of everyday choices, is driven by its anxiety over time—both its artificially imposed sense of “lack of time” and its determined effort to eliminate thought of a past or future that does not include human modernity. For the project of modernity to continue, we must, at all costs, deny the reality of deep time with all of its inconvenient truths—like the carbon and nitrogen cycles, climate-change induced extinction events, the evolution of symbiotic interdependencies. But like all repressed truths, the evidence of deep time keeps bubbling up—like brackish water in the Wheatbelt. Modernity’s insistence that landscapes are a static resource serving human purposes is a story that is conserved in landscapes across the globe through modernity’s heritage factories. These heritage factories determine which landscapes are frozen in time and which are developed to serve modern time, both contradictory approaches reifying modernity’s central myth that there is no time but now.

I’ve started this issue with Barstow’s essay because, in theoretical reflection and creative performance, it offers a dialogic approach to the complex of “Landscape: Heritage” themes explored throughout the rest of the issue. I’ve grouped other works into three different sections, led by the scholarly essays and followed by reviews, poems, photographs, and creative nonfiction, so that a critical-creative dialogue pervades the entire issue. Thus the general idea of modernity’s treatment of landscape as a heritage story of modern time(s), plays into several different focal points.

The first section relates to human travel across landscapes to trade, communicate, migrate, impressing the multiple stories of human-nature interaction upon the pathways created to serve those purposes. It starts with Jade Robeson’s geographical inquiry into the Natchitoches Trace, a pre-Columbian trading and migration route from modern-day

St. Louis to Natchitoches, a branch of a much more elaborate network of routes connecting North America to Mexico. Unlike Gettysburg, which is controlled by a single, State-sponsored master narrative, Natchitoches Trace heritages are locally controlled by descendent populations. Not only does Robeson's description of multiple, shared narratives co-existing in place counterpoint the curation of heritage landscape described in the other two scholarly essays, it complements Joyce Parks' poetry of traveling from the Darling Scarp across the Swan Coastal Plain and Joel Weishaus' multimedia meditation on the Anasazi's vanishing from their landscape. It coincides with the practice of naming places and endemic flora as a process of integrating human heritage with specific landscapes, as explored in both Patrick Armstrong's review of Robert Macfarlane's *Landmarks* and Nicole Hodgson's memoir-essay of following in the footsteps of Sarah Brooks, one of the great botanists of Western Australia. Jamie Holcombe's photograph of the road to Coffin Bay provides a visual denouement to this section.

In the second section, Patrick Armstrong's essay on "Darwin's Landscapes (and Seascapes)" shows how cultural heritage can be a useful epistemological frame for unlocking the plot of deep time in landscape morphology. As the master integrator, Darwin drew frameworks from Charles Lyell, Alexander von Humboldt and the picturesque landscape tradition in British literature to hypothesize the coherence of coral islands, atolls and reefs—these are not separate landforms as was believed at the time, but the same landform at different times. Our notions of evolving ecosystems are the legacy of Darwin's internalization of his English cultural heritage, no less than his syncretic understanding of the *Principles of Geology* and Humboldt's geographical science.

Such a revelation fits with John Ryan's review of *Thinking Continental*, a new, cross-disciplinary collection of creative and critical work from what's come to be known as "the Environmental Humanities." As Ryan, ventriloquizing contributor Harmon Maher, writes, "through layered thinking, it is possible to render deep time accessible to perception and consciousness." Layered thinking allowed Darwin to see different forms of landscape as the same identity at different times; this layered thinking is also essential to

Rita Tognini's excavations of the ancient, Nyoongar history of Boodjamooling, now scripted into Perth's "Hyde Park," or Shaun Salmon's poem "Slater Woodlice," and Terry Trowbridge's "Escarpment Spores." Layered thinking operates as a defense of place in Nandi Chinna's lyric renditions of the Roe 8 protests, an idiotic highway project proposed by the late Liberal government whose only successful outcome would have been the annihilation of one of Perth's last remaining wetlands. Chinna's poems illustrate the theory running through *Thinking Continental* and "Darwin's Landscapes": that the multimodal forms of art and literature are perhaps the only way humans can approach the biotic and cultural value of a place like the Bibra Wetlands.

It may seem ironic that our most powerful tools for containing the dynamic excess of landscapes—for creating "plots" of ground, anthropomorphizing rocks, trees, and creatures, and generating master signifiers of human value—can also be our best way of liberating our vision into the polyvocality of landscape. However, this is what is revealed in the two final pieces of this section, Sarah Lumba's story of flooding in the modern city of Marikina, Philippines following the Typhoon Ketsana, and James Kelly's shape poem, "The Journey of Water" which imagines, in the tradition of Aldo Leopold's story of the water cycle in *Sand County Almanack*, the flow of water from Andean glaciers through the Peruvian plain to the Pacific. Jamie Holcombe's "Two Tides" again seems a fitting visual coda to the methodology of "layered thinking" which has been explored in this section.

In the third section, William Nichols examines the way powerful, vested interests encode landscapes with specific heritage in order to control what is thought and done in those landscapes. Nichols examines Iowa through a variety of lenses, starting with Grant Wood's famous 1930 painting, *American Gothic*. The hegemonic meaning of "rural America" emerges in places like Iowa and is performed in its iconic landscapes and heritage rituals, despite the fact that these master meanings of "authentic" American are riven with contradiction that do not sit neatly with the actual inhabitants of rural Iowa. The American farmer is a myth in *American Gothic*, literally, since the original man who sat for the painting was a dentist, and figuratively, in the way biotechnology and globalized trade, not the values of self-reliance and make-do, shape American farming.

This modern American example pairs with Verena Höfig's essay, which also deconstructs the singular narrative dominating landscape in the medieval prose Sagas of Icelanders. According to Höfig, the sagas are a familial record, which valorize one genealogy, "whose descendants were integral to the creation of the country's political structure" (2). Icelandic place-names interpolate the political narrative into the landscape and concurrently ascribe the Icelanders origin of settlement to the 9<sup>th</sup> century Norwegian Viking Ingólfr Arnarson. Although at the time of settlement, Iceland is seemingly a unpeopled landscape (much as Australia was declared "Terra Nullus"), Höfig challenges a landscape heritage that is chiefly monophonic.

These contradictions between the surface image and the underlying power dynamics play out in *Taboo*, Kim Scott's new novel, reviewed by Rashida Murphy. As Murphy writes, "this is a story of dispossession, abuse, colonialism, addiction and racism," where landscape acts as a character and "proper Nyoongar" language is both antidote and a continuation of the lies that afflict First Nations struggling to reclaim their heritage after total dispossession. What is "proper heritage" in this context? Reconnection with the polyvocality and deep time of landscape appears to be the route to both truth and reconciliation, but it is not clear whether this route is a "recovery" or a new charting, an idea that suggests James Clifford's contrast between "routes" and "roots" to heritage.

A similar indeterminacy structures both John Gordon's "Sprung" and Allan Lake's "The Beholder": in both cases, there is too much self-consciousness in the speaker to blithely enjoy landscape aesthetic. Jamie Holcombe's "Mandurama Storm" photograph captures exactly these clashing intentionalities. His photograph, "Emily" seems a proper conclusion to the story of "Shifting Rurality." Though in an Australian context, the image gives rural solistalgia, sneeringly ballyhooed in the media-constructed "angry white man" of the Trump election, a more compassionate expression in the pathos of mourning a not-quite-understood, but deeply felt loss.

Community has been lost to the neoliberal modernist triumph of belief over place, but when we start reading the traces and layers of meaning occluded by our dominant

heritage industries, we may find a way of becoming human, once again, with landscapes, and relearn how to sing the land into being in co-constitutive ways.

I wish to acknowledge that I have written this essay and conducted the work for this issue on the traditional lands of the Whadjuk Nyoongar people, who are its traditional custodians, and pay my respects to the elders, past and present.